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## In Memoriam: Vaughn Charles Ball (1915-1985)

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*University of Georgia School of Law*

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## DEDICATION

### IN MEMORIAM: VAUGHN CHARLES BALL (1915-1985)

*C. Ronald Ellington\**

Vaughn C. Ball was the Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb Professor of Law at the University of Georgia School of Law from 1974 until his retirement in 1983. Vaughn's death on December 2, 1985, deprived those of us who were fortunate to know him well of a wonderful colleague whose keen mind, wry humor, and engaging wit added sparkle to any conversation.

Vaughn and I both taught Civil Procedure, and I considered him my teacher. Discussing a procedural problem with Vaughn was a sure way to hone one's own analytical skills and to deepen one's appreciation of the pride of place enjoyed by reason in the law. Each year we exchanged final exams. His were marvelous creations—original, penetrating and funny. Vaughn always laid clever traps for those students armed only with surface knowledge and pat answers. For him, as much as anyone I have known, good answers required the developed confidence to think afresh and thoroughly through familiar patterns to find deeper meaning and unrevealed truths.

Vaughn was a law professor's law professor. He enjoyed a long career as a law teacher and was known and respected throughout the law school world. Vaughn taught on the faculty of the Ohio State College of Law from 1948 to 1965 and held the Legion Lex Distinguished Professorship at the University of Southern California Law Center for nine years before joining the law faculty at Georgia. He held visiting professorships at the University of Texas, Northwestern University, and the University of Virginia. As a scholar

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\* Thomas R.R. Cobb Professor of Law, The University of Georgia. A.B., Emory University, 1963; LL.B., The University of Virginia, 1966; LL.M., Harvard University, 1978.

Vaughn was best known for his work in Evidence. He was a contributing author to the leading text of *McCormick on Evidence* and prepared materials on evidence which he used to teach state trial judges at the National College of the State Judiciary for many years.

While serving as a member of the Association of American Law Schools' and Law School Admissions Council's Joint Committee on the Demand for Legal Education, Vaughn was one of the pioneers in applying empirical research methods to forecasting the demand for legal education. As chairman of the Law School Admissions Test Research and Development Committee of the Law School Admissions Council, Vaughn made valuable contributions to improving the law school admissions test as an indicator of predicted success in first-year law studies. By helping to devise a useful common yardstick, the LSAT, Vaughn helped make the process of gaining admission to law school more objective and, I believe, a bit fairer.

During his long career, Vaughn Ball upheld the highest academic standards and values and brought honor to his chosen profession. He was a person of great personal integrity, and he did his job as a teacher of law well. Vaughn was a man of books and the library who yet understood the affairs of the world and the great forces that affect society. He was a scholar who took ideas seriously but never yielded to dogmatism or pomposity. He was a rare person who gained the respect of those who knew him as a teacher or a colleague because of his ingrained habit of independent thought, his insistence on meeting a rigorous standard of excellence in his own work and in setting that example for others, and his absolute delight in the life and play of the mind.

Vaughn was perfectly suited for a profession that celebrates intellectual excellence and the love of learning. He was one-of-a-kind, and he will be missed.